

§ 76.307

1081, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1088, 1089; (47 U.S.C. 152, 153, 154, 155, 301, 303, 307, 308, 309, 315, 317))

[39 FR 29186, Aug. 14, 1974, as amended at 40 FR 25024, June 12, 1975; 42 FR 19349, Apr. 13, 1977; 51 FR 26251, July 22, 1986; 56 FR 19617, Apr. 29, 1991; 57 FR 11001, Apr. 1, 1992; 58 FR 7993, Feb. 11, 1993; 59 FR 67103, Dec. 28, 1994]

§ 76.307 System inspection.

The operator of a cable television system shall make the system, its public inspection file (if required by § 76.305), and its records of subscribers available for inspection upon request by any authorized representative of the Commission at any reasonable hour.

[42 FR 19349, Apr. 13, 1977]

§ 76.309 Customer service obligations.

(a) A cable franchise authority may enforce the customer service standards set forth in paragraph (c) of this section against cable operators. The franchise authority must provide affected cable operators ninety (90) days written notice of its intent to enforce the standards.

(b) Nothing in this rule should be construed to prevent or prohibit:

(1) A franchising authority and a cable operator from agreeing to customer service requirements that exceed the standards set forth in paragraph (c) of this section;

(2) A franchising authority from enforcing, through the end of the franchise term, pre-existing customer service requirements that exceed the standards set forth in paragraph (c) of this section and are contained in current franchise agreements;

(3) Any State or any franchising authority from enacting or enforcing any consumer protection law, to the extent not specifically preempted herein; or

(4) The establishment or enforcement of any State or municipal law or regulation concerning customer service that imposes customer service requirements that exceed, or address matters not addressed by the standards set forth in paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) Effective July 1, 1993, a cable operator shall be subject to the following customer service standards:

(1) Cable system office hours and telephone availability—

(i) The cable operator will maintain a local, toll-free or collect call telephone

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access line which will be available to its subscribers 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

(A) Trained company representatives will be available to respond to customer telephone inquiries during normal business hours.

(B) After normal business hours, the access line may be answered by a service or an automated response system, including an answering machine. Inquiries received after normal business hours must be responded to by a trained company representative on the next business day.

(ii) Under normal operating conditions, telephone answer time by a customer representative, including wait time, shall not exceed thirty (30) seconds when the connection is made. If the call needs to be transferred, transfer time shall not exceed thirty (30) seconds. These standards shall be met no less than ninety (90) percent of the time under normal operating conditions, measured on a quarterly basis.

(iii) The operator will not be required to acquire equipment or perform surveys to measure compliance with the telephone answering standards above unless an historical record of complaints indicates a clear failure to comply.

(iv) Under normal operating conditions, the customer will receive a busy signal less than three (3) percent of the time.

(v) Customer service center and bill payment locations will be open at least during normal business hours and will be conveniently located.

(2) Installations, outages and service calls. Under normal operating conditions, each of the following four standards will be met no less than ninety five (95) percent of the time measured on a quarterly basis:

(i) Standard installations will be performed within seven (7) business days after an order has been placed. “Standard” installations are those that are located up to 125 feet from the existing distribution system.

(ii) Excluding conditions beyond the control of the operator, the cable operator will begin working on “service interruptions” promptly and in no event later than 24 hours after the interruption becomes known. The cable

operator must begin actions to correct other service problems the next business day after notification of the service problem.

(iii) The “appointment window” alternatives for installations, service calls, and other installation activities will be either a specific time or, at maximum, a four-hour time block during normal business hours. (The operator may schedule service calls and other installation activities outside of normal business hours for the express convenience of the customer.)

(iv) An operator may not cancel an appointment with a customer after the close of business on the business day prior to the scheduled appointment.

(v) If a cable operator representative is running late for an appointment with a customer and will not be able to keep the appointment as scheduled, the customer will be contacted. The appointment will be rescheduled, as necessary, at a time which is convenient for the customer.

(3) Communications between cable operators and cable subscribers—

(i) Notifications to subscribers—

(A) The cable operator shall provide written information on each of the following areas at the time of installation of service, at least annually to all subscribers, and at any time upon request:

(1) Products and services offered;

(2) Prices and options for programming services and conditions of subscription to programming and other services;

(3) Installation and service maintenance policies;

(4) Instructions on how to use the cable service;

(5) Channel positions programming carried on the system; and,

(6) Billing and complaint procedures, including the address and telephone number of the local franchise authority’s cable office.

(B) Customers will be notified of any changes in rates, programming services or channel positions as soon as possible in writing. Notice must be given to subscribers a minimum of thirty (30) days in advance of such changes if the change is within the control of the cable operator. In addition, the cable operator shall notify subscribers thirty (30) days in advance of any significant

changes in the other information required by paragraph (c)(3)(i)(A) of this section. Notwithstanding any other provision of Part 76, a cable operator shall not be required to provide prior notice of any rate change that is the result of a regulatory fee, franchise fee, or any other fee, tax, assessment, or charge of any kind imposed by any Federal agency, State, or franchising authority on the transaction between the operator and the subscriber.

(ii) Billing—

(A) Bills will be clear, concise and understandable. Bills must be fully itemized, with itemizations including, but not limited to, basic and premium service charges and equipment charges. Bills will also clearly delineate all activity during the billing period, including optional charges, rebates and credits.

(B) In case of a billing dispute, the cable operator must respond to a written complaint from a subscriber within 30 days.

(iii) Refunds—Refund checks will be issued promptly, but no later than either—

(A) The customer’s next billing cycle following resolution of the request or thirty (30) days, whichever is earlier, or

(B) The return of the equipment supplied by the cable operator if service is terminated.

(iv) Credits—Credits for service will be issued no later than the customer’s next billing cycle following the determination that a credit is warranted.

(4) Definitions—

(i) *Normal business hours*—The term “normal business hours” means those hours during which most similar businesses in the community are open to serve customers. In all cases, “normal business hours” must include some evening hours at least one night per week and/or some weekend hours.

(ii) *Normal operating conditions*—The term “normal operating conditions” means those service conditions which are within the control of the cable operator. Those conditions which are *not* within the control of the cable operator include, but are not limited to, natural disasters, civil disturbances, power outages, telephone network outages, and severe or unusual weather conditions. Those conditions which *are*

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ordinarily within the control of the cable operator include, but are not limited to, special promotions, pay-per-view events, rate increases, regular peak or seasonal demand periods, and maintenance or upgrade of the cable system.

(iii) *Service interruption*—The term “service interruption” means the loss of picture or sound on one or more cable channels.

[58 FR 21109, Apr. 19, 1993, as amended at 61 FR 18977, Apr. 30, 1996]

Subpart I—Forms and Reports

§ 76.400 Operator, mail address, and operational status changes.

Within 30 days following a change of Cable Television System Operator, and/or change of the operator's mail address, and/or change in the operational status of a cable television system, the Operator shall inform the Commission in writing of the following, as appropriate;

(a) The legal name of the operator and whether the operator is an individual, private association, partnership or corporation. See § 76.5(cc). If the operator is a partnership, the legal name of the partner responsible for communications with the Commission shall be supplied;

(b) The assumed name (if any) used for doing business in each community;

(c) The new mail address, including zip code, to which all communications are to be directed;

(d) The nature of the operational status change (e.g., became operational on (year) (month), exceeded 49 subscribers, exceeded 499 subscribers, operation terminated temporarily, operation terminated permanently);

(e) The names and FCC identifiers (e.g., CA0001) of the system communities affected.

NOTE: FCC system community identifiers are routinely assigned upon registration. They have been assigned to all reported system communities based on previous Form 325 data. If a system community in operation prior to March 31, 1972, has not previously been assigned a system community identifier, the operator shall provide the following information in lieu of the identifier: Community Name, Community Type (i.e., incorporated town, unincorporated settlement,

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etc.) County Name, State, Operator Legal Name, Operator Assumed Name for Doing Business in the community, Operator Mail Address, and Year and Month service was first provided by the physical system.

[42 FR 20134, Apr. 18, 1977, as amended at 43 FR 49009, Oct. 20, 1978; 54 FR 41843, Oct. 12, 1989]

§ 76.403 Cable television system reports.

The operator of every operational cable television system shall correct and/or furnish information in response to forms, encompassing each community unit, mailed to said operator by the Commission. These include:

Community unit data—“Annual Report of Cable Television System,” Form 325, Schedule 1

Physical system data—“Annual Report of Cable Television System,” Form 325, Schedule 2

Operator ownership data—“Annual Report of Cable Television,” Form 325, Schedules 3 and 4

These forms shall be completed and returned to the Commission within 60 days after the date of mailing by the Commission.

NOTE: The operator of a cable television system having fewer than 1000 subscribers shall only be required to file Schedules 1 and 2 of Form 325 for each community unit.

[50 FR 40857, Oct. 7, 1985]

Subpart J—Ownership of Cable Systems

§ 76.501 Cross-ownership.

(a) No cable television system (including all parties under common control) shall carry the signal of any television broadcast station if such system directly or indirectly owns, operates, controls, or has an interest in a TV broadcast station whose predicted Grade B contour, computed in accordance with § 73.684 of part 73 of this chapter, overlaps in whole or in part the service area of such system (i.e., the area within which the system is serving subscribers).

(b) [Reserved]

(c) *Effective date.* The provisions of paragraph (a) of this section are not effective until November 8, 1987, as to ownership interests proscribed herein if